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Coláiste Mhuire,
Johnstown,
Co. Kilkenny

Principal:
Mr Martin Gleeson

Deputy Principal:
Ms Angela Conroy

Substance Use Policy

February 7th, 2022.
Review Date: Feb 2023

Signed: Mary Heda Kavanagh.
Chairperson of Board of Management

SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all students, all members of staff and personnel within Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown its lands and its environs. Students will be governed by this policy throughout the school day, when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform. It also applies to all those using the premises.

Coláiste Mhuire Mission Statement

Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown is a modern second level school whose central purpose is the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of the student in an atmosphere of Christian care and concern.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated to protect all the pupils and staff in the school. Many issues outside our school have an impact on our school community. The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol, and drug misuse pose challenges for the school as a social partner. The Board of Management of Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown recognises that the issue of substance use is very serious and can impact on staff and students. In arriving at a policy to deal with the possession of, distribution of, the use of and the abuse of substances, the school is conscious that each situation is unique and so a flexible response is required.

When referring to substances the Board of Management of Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown defines them as follows:

- All substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, the misuse of solvents, the use and misuse of matches, lighters and fireworks, bangers all alcohol and tobaccos used contrary to the law of the land.
- Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown also reserves the right to determine that electronic-cigarettes or e-cigarettes, vaporisers or any such related tobacco substitute product is a substance the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited.
- Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown also reserves the right to determine if a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.
- The school policy aims to cooperate fully with the strategic plan adopted by the government under the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 and made mandatory for school in DES circular 18/02. The Education Act 1998 provides that schools promote the social and personal education of students and provide health education for them.

School policy

The school does not accept or tolerate the possession, use, or supply of banned or prohibited substances and or drug paraphernalia by any student, staff, or visitor in the school, on school trips and outings, during any school related activity or going to and coming from school, when wearing the school uniform or wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

1. Parents of students taking prescribed medication should inform the school in writing of that fact.
2. Staff member are not personally obliged to administer medicines. It is recognised that children with long term recurring health problems such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc. be accommodated within the school. However, proper procedures for the administration of such medicines must be made.
3. Parents /guardians are to be encouraged to provide maximum support and assistance in helping the school accommodate such students. This would include measures such as self-medication where necessary and only after approval from a GP/consultant or under parental supervision.
4. In the case of a student needing to administer medication daily, check and monitor an illness with the aid of an app, mobile phone or digital device, a space will be provided, where possible, for the student to use their device & administer the prescribed medication. The school must be informed in writing of the need to use an app, mobile phone, or digital device to manage an illness or monitor the administration of daily prescribed medication.
5. In the case where a student is suffering from a life-threatening illness, parents/guardians should consult with the Principal/Deputy Principal and should outline clearly in writing what may and may not be done in a particular emergency with reference to what may be of risk to the student. This must be backed up with a letter from the GP/consultant caring for the student.
6. In the case of medical emergencies where staff have been given medication to administer, only the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery, until a medical expert can take over, should be provided for administration. Confirmation of this should be obtained from the GP responsible for the child in question before the school would agree to hold such lifesaving medication in its care.
7. No member of staff has the authority to administer any other medication or over the counter painkillers to a student without parental approval and permission from the principal.

Education in relation to substance use for students.

Education about the use of drugs and the consequences of the misuse of substances will be provided as part of a broad developmental SPHE programme. This will be delivered through specific modules that are age appropriate. Substance use programmes will also form part of other school subjects such as R.E., PE, and CSPE. It also forms part of the following subjects: Home Economics and Science and R.E. Support Services within the school may also offer

education in this area; SCP, NBSS, HSCL. Services outside the school include Gardai, ISPCC and the HSE. Expert speakers may be invited from time to time to speak to students and parents' groups.

Role of Parents

Parents are expected to acknowledge the importance of all school programmes that the school provides for the students.

They should.

- Attend where possible, talks and courses provided for parents in relation to substance use/ abuse.
- Recognise that they are in partnership with the school in informing their children regarding substance use.
- Assist and cooperate fully with the school as it seeks to deal justly and effectively with any incidents that may arise.

To assist the parents in their role the school will:

Provide them with information on what is happening in the school regarding education programmes, encourage and welcome consultation with parents on the best use of available resources in the community to support the school in its programme and policy implementation.

In the event of an incident of substance use, Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown will seek to strike a balance between the welfare of the student or students involved and the welfare of the school community.

CONCERN REGARDING STUDENTS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCE USE OUTSIDE SCHOOL

When the school authorities are made aware that a real concern exists where a student may be involved in illegal substance use outside school, the following procedure is followed:

- The parents of the student will be informed in writing or by phone by the principal about the concern. It will be stressed that the school is not accusing the student of using illegal substances but is relaying its concern that this might be the case.
- The parents may be invited into the school to meet with the principal and discuss the concern. The principal will make them aware of any support services in the school, and the need to contact their GP or the Drug Awareness Unit (which may offer testing for illegal substances and follow up counselling).

PROCEDURES IN MANAGING AND INVESTIGATING AN INCIDENT OF SUBSTANCE USE

1. Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown reserves the right to suspend or remove temporarily from the school, any student involved in a suspected use incident pending a further and complete investigation of the incident. This applies particularly where there is a threat to the health and safety of students or the school community.

2. A Referral Report Form will be completed.

3. Designated school personnel will then fully investigate and assess any use incident and will take whatever time it deems necessary to do this.

4. Designated school personnel will take possession of any banned or prohibited substances or paraphernalia associated with the use incident, and carefully record all such items. They will retain them pending completion of the investigation, unless otherwise instructed by appropriate outside agencies.

5. In the event of an incident, the school will seek statements from all persons involved in, and concerned with, or having knowledge of the incident. They will record this statement as part of the investigation.

6. The school will maintain a written record of all stages of the investigation of the incident including records referred to in the above steps, records of communications with all people or agencies involved or concerned with the matters under investigation, the investigation outcome, decisions taken and the rationale for these decisions. The school will also keep a record of any penalties or disciplinary measures imposed following an investigation and the management and outcome of any appeal that may arise following an investigation.

7. Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown, at its own discretion will liaise with any appropriate outside authority and seek advice or assistance, as it deems appropriate in relation to its investigation of an incident.

8. If circumstances merit, and an investigation is continuing the school, will put the full particulars of the incident to the students concerned and their parents/guardians in the following manner.

(a) Copies of all records deemed relevant to the position of the student concerned and to the nature of the complaints or allegations that a student is facing will be made available to the student and his/her parents/ guardians at the discretion of the school. This will be done in time to permit the student a reasonable opportunity to make their own reply to the matters at issue and any representation that he/she would wish to make or have made on his/her behalf.

(b) The school will allow the student concerned and their parents/guardians reasonable

time to respond to the matters at issue. The school will consider any response made and any other relevant extraneous considerations or mitigating circumstances that may be appropriate to the specific case.

(c) The school shall shortly thereafter inform the student and their parents of the school's findings and their reasons for these. If the school finds that the student has been guilty of or has been involved in/or implicated in an incident, it shall indicate the penalty or sanctions that it intends to impose in the circumstances. These sanctions include and are not limited to Suspension.

9. In relation to a verified and investigated incident, the school and/or the Board of Management may implement disciplinary actions or sanctions, including but not limited to an oral warning, a written warning, detention, suspension, and expulsion.

10. The school can, at its sole discretion, postpone the issue of sanctions to take account of mitigating circumstances or representations that it considers should be taken into account.

11. The school should also ensure that pastoral supports are offered to the student/students and parents affected by an incident of substance use. These incidents can be traumatic for those involved and the assistance of a Year Head, Class teacher, Counsellor, School Completion Programme etc. will be made available. External sources of support may also be recommended. Return to school may depend on participation in an appropriate counselling /addiction programme. Parental involvement and guarantees may also be required.

THE INVOLVEMENT AND ROLES OF VARIOUS PARTIES IN AN INCIDENT INVESTIGATION.

The Principal or Principal's nominated person, the Deputy Principal or nominated staff member is the person responsible for all matters in this area.
The principal/or nominated person will have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. The principal is responsible for dealing with incidents arising at the school.

2. All reports of use or suspected incidents must be reported to the principal.

3. The principal makes all decisions regarding investigation of an incident: communication with, liaison with and reporting to relevant parties; and disclosure of information regarding an investigation.

4. The principal is responsible for keeping all relevant parties properly informed regarding investigation documents.

5. The principal is responsible for the secure and confidential storage of any written documentation and records associated with an incident.

6. The principal is responsible for taking possession of any banned or prohibited substances or drug paraphernalia and deciding what should be done with same upon appropriate advice.

7. The principal may seek the assistance of the Deputy Principal, Year Head, and or school guidance counsellor in conducting an incident investigation.

8. Communication with the student and parents will be as per the procedures laid down in the previous section.

9. The principal will decide on the appropriate sanction, suspension, or referral to the Board of Management for a longer suspension or expulsion.

DUTY OF STAFF
The Board of Management requires all staff to report immediately, via the incident report form/ referral forms, any incidents where pupils/employees/visitors:

- Encounter the use /suspected use of alcohol drugs on the school premises in the school grounds or during a school related activity
- Exhibit symptoms/behaviour that may suggest the use of alcohol/drugs
- Are involved or suspected of being involved in the distribution, purchase, or use of alcohol/drugs.
- Discover suspect substances /paraphernalia in the school.

The school personnel will seek to establish the facts and to be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on a course of action. There will be no assumption of guilt at this stage

The student should not be confronted openly before his/her peers. There should be no assumption of guilt regarding substance misuse/ use, as there are a variety of conditions, which might mimic the suspected misuse of substances. The possession of tablets might be for medicinal use.

The teacher is entitled to request the surrender of a suspicious substance or paraphernalia.

This should be handed over without fuss. The teacher should not seek to search the pupil or his/her possessions. Where there is a refusal to co-operate, the pupil should be brought to the principal whose responsibility it is to proceed with the matter.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal /Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags clothing, locker, and personal possessions if necessary.

In the case of lack of cooperation from the student, the parents should be informed of the situation and that the Gardai may have to be notified. The student's bags, and personal property should be isolated until the parents/Gardai arrive.

Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown reserves the right to search school property including lockers and toilets at any time.

The Principal /Deputy Principal/Health & Safety Officer will recognise that the Health and Safety and the wellbeing of the student/students are paramount and will seek medical aid if deemed necessary. The student will be provided with the appropriate guidance and support they need.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate to indicate they are drug free and are not a threat to Health and Safety before they return to school.

Suspected Substance Use
In the case of a suspected use incident the school will immediately inform parents /guardians. This will be done without prejudice to the school's separate and independent obligation to investigate and manage any use incident.

STAFF / PASTORAL CARE TEAM

The relevant support systems of the school will be mobilised: Guidance Counsellor, Year Hear, Class Teachers, Wellbeing Coordinator, Pastoral Care Support Team and School Completion officer. Where considered necessary, legal advice will be sought. If illegal drugs/paraphernalia are found on the school premises, the school will contact the Gardai about its safe disposal.
It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principal to summon such persons as may be helpful to the issue.
Teachers in their pastoral role may encounter changes in a student's behaviour and attitude on occasion or over a period. This may be for a variety of reasons and may not necessarily be indicative of substance misuse. The role of the teacher carries a duty of care towards the pupil, which involves a degree of confidentiality. However, this does not preclude reporting a genuine suspicion or concern. The quality of the relationship between teacher and the pupil is central to noticing change in behaviour.
Teachers should always discuss any significant altered behaviour or performance of a pupil with the Year Head. This student may then be referred to the Pastoral Care Support Team or the Guidance Counsellor.

The principal may decide to inform the parents, involve the Board of Management, and recommend addiction counselling and parental involvement in this. Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown also retains the right to seek a medical certificate at any time, to indicate that they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND MEDIA INQUIRIES
While confidentiality will be maintained as far as practicable the duty of teachers and staff to the school community preclude them from offering total confidentiality to any students when they come in contact with a use incident or suspected use incident. The school may be required, in a given situation, to contact as appropriate such authorities as, the Gardai, HSE, Probation Service or Officers of the Courts.
The school may need to engage the expert assistance of an appropriate third party to properly investigate an incident.
In the event of a media enquiry arising from an alleged substance use incident in the school, the school will undertake not to comment on any individual matter while an investigation is in progress other than to outline policy.
However, in the interests of the school's reputation, The Board of Management may clarify the school's position regarding an incident after the investigation has been completely concluded.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In relation to STAFF Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown will.

- Deliver training in delivering education programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Specify training on the role of staff in the management and investigation of a substance incident.

In relation to PARENTS, the Board of Management, Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown will:

- Provide opportunities to attend information sessions and workshops in relation to drugs and the policy.
- Seek and provide appropriate information, guidance, and support to the board regarding issues relating to investigation of and adjudication on incident investigations.

In relation to STUDENTS Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown will:

- offer all students programmes relating to alcohol, tobacco misuse and Drug education within the context of the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate.

TOBACCO

Students must comply with Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 and be advised that breaches may be reported to the Environmental Health Officer and liable to the penalties referred to in the Act.

- Smoking is prohibited on the school premises both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It applies to all those using the premises.
- Students are also governed by this policy when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform and wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

STUDENTS FOUND SMOKING

Students who do not comply with Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 and the school Code of Behaviour will be subject to the following sanctions:

- Cigarettes will be confiscated
- Parents will be contacted by the Principal/Deputy Principal
- 1st offence: Friday or lunch time detention or if using outside on school grounds or school events
- 2nd offence: 2 Friday detentions or lunch time detentions if using outside on school grounds or school events and is a 1st file offence.
- Subsequent offences if using outside on school grounds or school events: 1-day suspension.
- 1st offence if caught using inside school toilets/classroom 2- Friday or lunch time detentions and first file offence
- 2nd and subsequent offences using inside school toilets/classroom 2-day suspensions
- There may be instances where we will require guidance from the Board of Management.

In all cases students will be spoken to by their year head, school management or guidance counsellor. The dangers of the act of smoking will be discussed and methods to help them quit.

STUDENTS FOUND SELLING OR DISTRUBUTING CIGARETTES

Any student found to be providing or selling cigarettes to other students will be subject to the Code of Behaviour and the following sanctions:

- 1-day suspension for their first offence and
- 3-day suspensions for any subsequent offences.

E-CIGARETTES/VAPORISERS

'Vaping' or use of e-cigarettes is prohibited on the school premises both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time. It applies to all those using the premises. Students are also governed by this policy when representing the school or involved in any school activity both during and outside normal school hours including school break time and lunch time and including going to and coming from school or when wearing the school uniform and wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

STUDENTS FOUND USING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES/VAPORISERS

The sanctions for the use of electronic cigarettes/vaporisers may include and are not limited to:

- Any vaporising substances &/OR paraphernalia found will be confiscated
- Parents will be contact by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head
- A referral report will be filled in
- 1st offence: Friday detention or lunch time detention if using outside on school grounds or school events
- 2nd offence: 2 Friday detentions or lunch time detentions if using outside on school grounds or school events and first file offence.
- Subsequent offences if using outside on school grounds or school events: 1-day suspension.
- 1st offence if caught using inside school toilets/classroom 2- Friday detentions or lunch time detentions and first file offence
- 2nd offence: 1 day suspension
- Any subsequent offences using inside school toilets/classroom 2-day suspensions
- If a student knowingly uses a vape with Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or any other banned substance, they will receive a 5-day suspension and must partake in drug awareness counselling.
- There may be instances where we will require guidance from the Board of Management.

In all cases students will be spoken to by their year head, school management or guidance counsellor. The dangers of the act of vaping will be discussed and methods to help them quit.

Students caught supplying a vape

- Any student who supplies or sells a vape to another student will receive a 2-day suspension for their first offence and 5-day suspensions for any subsequent offences.
- If a student supplies/sells a vape for use to another student(s) with Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or any other banned substance it will be reported to the

Board of Management to consider the appropriate sanction which includes suspension/expulsion. It will also be reported to the Gardaí.

ALCOHOL

A. Where a student is suspected of taking, possession or supplying alcohol in school or on a school activity the matter must be reported to the Principal (or in their absence the Deputy Principal) immediately. The principal will make immediate contact with the Parents and investigate the incident. If it is proven that the students have taken, in possession or supplied alcohol, then procedures and sanctions will be as follows:

- 1st offence for taking/possession/supplying alcohol: 3-day suspension.
- Subsequent offences: It will be reported to the Board of Management to consider the appropriate sanction which includes suspension/expulsion.

B. Where a pupil presents displaying the effects of alcohol, the principal will be informed immediately, and the incident will be investigated. The parents will be notified and will be asked to collect the pupil from school. The student will also be referred to Guidance Counsellor in the school.

C. On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender any alcoholic substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags, lockers, clothing, and personal possessions and request the support of the parents where necessary.

D. Any alcohol found, will be confiscated.

DRUGS

A. Where a student is suspected of taking, possession or supplying alcohol in school or on a school activity the matter must be reported to the Principal (or in their absence the Deputy Principal) immediately. The principal will make immediate contact with the Parents and investigate the incident. If it is proven that the students have taken, in possession or supplied alcohol, then procedures and sanctions will be as follows:

- If a student knowingly uses a banned drug/or misuses a prescribed or over the counter drug, they will receive a 5-day suspension and must partake in drug awareness counselling.
- If a student supplies/sells a banned drug /prescribed or over the counter drug to another student(s) it will be reported to the Board of Management to consider the appropriate sanction which includes suspension/expulsion. It will also be reported to the Gardaí.

B. Where a pupil presents displaying apparent effects of drugs, the principal will be informed immediately, and the incident will be investigated. The parents will be notified and asked to collect the pupil from school. A drug test may be requested on the grounds of Health and Safety.
Sanctions will be applied with a 5-day suspension and referral to the BOM (Board of management) for further action where necessary.
The student will also be referred to Guidance Counsellor in the school.

C. On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender any suspicious substance and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags, lockers, clothing, and personal possessions and request the support of the parents where necessary.

D. Any substances found, will be confiscated, sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious substance/paraphernalia and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents if necessary.

Where a student is found promoting or glorifying a drugs culture in word or deed or the use of drug paraphernalia the matter must be reported to the Principal/Deputy. The student will be interviewed and advised. The parents will be informed. The students may be referred for counselling. Sanctions may be applied up to and including suspension and referral to the BOM for further action.

On Health and Safety grounds the Principal / Deputy Principal can request the student in question to surrender the suspicious paraphernalia and to cooperate in revealing the contents of bags lockers, clothing and personal possessions and request the support of the parents where necessary. Any paraphernalia found will be confiscated sealed in a container in the presence of a witness, handed over to the Gardai or destroyed. Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown reserves the right to determine that a said behaviour or action is in breach of our policy and has the right to apply sanctions that are fair and in keeping with the gravity of the offence.

AUTOMATIC EXPULSION

There may be exceptional circumstances due to the inappropriate use of drugs/alcohol, where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for an offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel based on a single breach of the code could include:

- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school. This includes but is not limited to Class A, B & C type drugs, and using or supplying prescribed or over the counter medication.
- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Use of a weapon, improvised weapon or any implement used in a fight or in an act of aggression towards another student or member of staff and/or the recording of any such instances
- Sexual assault
- Any other act the Board deem to be at odds to the Health & Safety of other students attending Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown

The Board of Management may decide following consultation with the principal that the above listed behaviours may incur expulsion as a sanction, regardless of it being deemed a first offence.

ADULTS
A staff member presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed take part in his /her normal duties. The matter will be reported to our director of schools and the chairperson of the BOM. Such an incident would be regarded as professional misconduct and a breach of contract.

A parent or other adult presenting under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be afforded an interview with any member of staff. He/she will be asked to leave the premises by the Principal/Deputy. Failure to do so will result in Gardai being called.
A formal letter of complaint will be issued by the BOM in such instances and where necessary a legal injunction will be sought to prevent a re-occurrence of such an incident.

The school operates a NO SMOKING POLICY in accordance with the present national legislation.
Staff should not smoke/vaporise in view of students or on outside activities including sporting events and school tours.

A student may be asked to provide a medical certificate at any stage that they are drugs free and are not a threat to Health and Safety.

REVIEW
Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown will monitor, review, and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practise.
Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown reserves the right to alter this policy document in the light of any new developments before a full review takes place.

<u>Appendix Definitions</u>

The following definitions apply in this policy:

SCHOOL
The school includes all Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown school buildings, grounds, play areas, public areas where students congregate going to and coming from school, school related activities and wherever our school Code of Behaviour applies.

BANNED OR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES
Banned or Prohibited Substances includes all substances covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act, non-validated prescription medication, the misuse of solvents, use of matches, lighters and fireworks, bangers, all alcohol, and tobacco used contrary to the law of the land.

Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown also reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance.

DRUG PARAPHERNALIA
Drug Paraphernalia includes any banned or prohibited substance as defined above, any items that may be used in the taking of illegal substances and any written printed or graphic material promoting the use of illicit substances.

A USE
A Use incident is any incident relating to banned or prohibited substances that occurs in the school or during school functions or outings or any such incident that may be deemed damaging to the health and welfare of Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown. Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown reserves the right to determine whether a specific incident constitutes a use incident to be addressed under the terms of Substance Use Policy.

PARENTS
In this policy Parents include natural parents, foster parents, stepparents, or guardian of the student concerned or any person acting in loco parentis either on a temporary or permanent capacity on the date of the use incident.

PRINCIPAL
In this policy the principal means the principal at the time as appointed by the school and defined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 or the Deputy Principal where the principal is either unavailable or has delegated to the Deputy Principal.

DESIGNATED SCHOOL PERSONNEL
In this policy the Designated School Personnel at the time as appointed to the role of Year Head, Deputy Principal & Principal.

APPENDIX

STEPS FOR MANAGING DRUG RELATED INCIDENCES

The School Approach: We acknowledge that, in all situations involving drugs, it is necessary to find a balance between the needs of the student, the needs of the school community and the reputation of the school. Listening, establishing facts, and providing support will be our initial approach to the situation.

Drug Incidents: The following are example of a drug incident:

- Suspicion of drug use, possession or dealing

- Emergencies when the person may be unconscious
- Disclosure by another person
- Possession of a drug on the school premises or on a school-related activity
- Selling/supplying legal/illegal drugs
- School grounds being used for drug activity
- Drug paraphernalia found on school property

Managing a Drug Incident: All members of staff need to be aware of the signs of drug use and to be alert for changes in behaviour. It is important that, in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents, a limited number of staff be involved in managing the incident. Staff will be informed on a 'need to know' basis. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, HSCL (Home School Community Liaison) and person(s) directly involved in the case will be informed. In situations of confirmed use/possession or supply then all the details will be recorded and acted upon. All written documentation will be kept in the confidential care of the principal.

Parents: In the event of parents being unwilling or unable to co-operate with the school, the school will contact the social work department of the Health Service Executive (HSE) for advice and support. Parents will be informed beforehand if the school is about to take this course of action.

Gardaí: It is agreed that the principal or a designated liaison person will contact the Gardaí in the event of a confirmed drug incident, and they will deal with any drugs found on the premises.

Counselling/Pastoral Care: For some young people, their involvement with drugs may be masking some underlying difficulties and, for others, it may be a phase of experimentation that they will pass through safely. In response to all incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

If the person has a drug problem, then referral to an appropriate service will be recommended. Parents and staff involved in the incident will be offered support.

Disciplinary Procedures: Drug incidents are complex and, in situations where the school rules regarding drugs are broken, sanctions and punishments (for example, suspension and expulsion), consistent with the nature and severity of the offence, will be implemented.

Confidentiality: Teachers cannot offer total confidentiality to a student who discloses drug involvement. Information must, however, only be disclosed on a strict 'need to know' basis. The student must be informed about what is happening and why. The school recognises that

the issue of confidentiality is complex. It is important, therefore, that, in each school year, the issue of confidentiality be discussed with all students.

Media: Only the Principal or a spokesperson nominated by them will handle all media queries. The school will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the school policy and the procedures in place to manage any drug-related incident.

Date of Review: February 2024.